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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 EUR-12 ACDA-07 AID-05
OMB-01 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN ESTABLISHMENT CONCERNS ON PEACE PROGRESS

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SUMMARY: REMARKS BY EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS AT AHRAM SEMINAR MARCH 6 SUMMARIZE FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS OF PRO-US AND PRO-SADAT ESTABLISHMENT: ISRAEL HAS NO REASON TO CHANGE "STALLING TACTICS" ARTICULATED BY RABIN TO PRESS IN DECEMBER 1974; DURABLE PEACE REQUIRES INITIAL RESOLUTION PALESTINIAN ISSUE, BUT GOI FOCUSES ON GENERAL ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE; PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP NOW WANTS MINI-STATE, BUT IT UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT FORMAL CHARTER AMENDMENT; USG CAN ACT AGAINST SUCH "IMMORAL" ACTIVITIES AS ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY; SADAT, WHO PERHAPS
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SHOULD BE "BLAMED" FOR OVERESTIMATING US PRESSURE ON ISRAEL, IS IN DANGER OF FACING
NEW SOCIAL EARTHQUAKE IF USG DOES NOT MOVE SOON. END SUMMARY.

1. SEMINAR BY VISITING USIS SPONSORED AMERICAN PROFESSOR HUREWITZ HELD AT AHRAM MARCH 6 PROVIDED INTERESTING INSIGHT INTO CONCERNS OF EGYPTIAN ESTABLISHMENT ABOUT PEACE PROCESS. WE SUMMARIZE BELOW

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REMARKS BY TWO MODERATE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS WHOSE VIEWS WE THINK TYPICAL OF MANY ARTICULATE SUPPORTERS OF SADAT AND US/GOE APPROACH TO PEACE.

(A) WHY WOULD ISRAEL DESIRE PEACE NOW? NO ONE BELIEVES ISRAELIS ARE ENAMOURED OF WAR. HOWEVER, IN DECEMBER 1974, RABIN TOLD ISRAELI NEWSPAPER (HA'ARETZ - SEE REFTEL) THAT ISRAEL'S POLICY SHOULD BE TO STALL PEACE PROCESS FOR SIX OR SEVEN YEARS (BY WHICH TIME WEST WOULD HOPEFULLY DIVEST ITSELF OF DEPENDENCE ON ARAB OIL AND ISRAEL WOULD HAVE TIME TO WORK AGAINST ARAB UNITY). WHY SHOULD RABIN HAVE CHANGED HIS VIEW, GIVEN BOTH ISRAEL'S IMPROVED MILITARY POSITION VIS-A-VIS ARABS AND COMPARATIVE INSTABILITY OF EGYPT AFTER JANUARY RIOTS.

(B) NATURE OF PEACE. GOI, APPARENTLY IN EFFORT TO STALL, KEEPS RAISING THE ANTE. TACTIC IS ANALOGOUS TO REACTION OF THOSE ARABS WHO DO NOT SEEK ARAB UNITY AND THEREFORE CALL INSTEAD FOR EVEN MORE IMPOSSIBLE GOAL OF ISLAMIC UNITY; I.E. IF YOU DO NOT WANT THE POSSIBLE, DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE. ISRAELI INSISTENCE ON DIPLOMATIC/COMMERCIAL RELATIONS IS SENSELESS. PIECE OF PAPER DOES NOT INSURE STABILITY OF PEACE AGREEMENT. WHAT MATTERS IS POLITICAL WILL. "MANY ARABS", NOTING PERIOD OF ISRAELI "COLONIALISM" IS OVER, SEE IN GOI'S INSISTENCE ON NORMAL ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL RELATIONS A CREEPING NEO-IMPERIALISM, AN INTENT TO SEEK LEVERAGE
WITHIN ARAB ECONOMIES.

(C) PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION AT MEPC. ONE PROFESSOR SAID "I (AS AN EGYPTIAN) AM INVOLVED IN ISRAEL ONLY BECAUSE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PALESTINE;" IF IT WERE NOT FOR PALESTINE, THERE WOULD BE EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI PEACE NOW. THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS TO CONFLICT, ISRAELI/ARAB DISPUTE AND ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN DISPUTE. ISRAEL WISHES RESOLVE ITS DISPUTE WITH ARABS AT EXPENSE ITS DISPUTE WITH PALESTINIANS. THIS WAY IMPASSE LIES, AND GOI KNOWS IT. IF PEACE IS TO BE DURABLE, PALESTINIAN PROBLEM MUST BE RESOLVED FIRST. ANTI-EGYPTIAN OUTCRY OF OTHER ARABS AFTER SINAI II PROVIDED DRAMATIC ILLUSTRATION THAT
BILATERAL DEALS WON'T WORK. THERE MUST BE PACKAGE DEAL BASED ON RESOLUTION PALESTINIAN QUESTION.

(D) AMENDMENT OF NATIONAL CHARTER. PALESTINIANS HAVE CHANGED THEIR VIEWS ON ISRAEL, AS SHOW, E.G., BY PLO'S LONDON REP'S ADVOCATING A MINI-STATE, SARTAWI'S CONTACTS IN PARIS. WHY SEEK HUMILIATE PLO'S LEADERSHIP BY INSISTING ON FORMAL AMENDMENT OF CHARTER. PLO LEADERS, LIKE GOE, HAVE DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS WHICH SHOULD NOT BE DISMISSED.

(E) IS USG BUYING TIME? ADMITTING THAT USG IS BOUND BY

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CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION, IT IS STILL DIFFICULT BELIEVE
USG CAN NOT ACT ON CERTAIN MAJOR ISSUES, ESPEICALLY ISRAELI
SETTLEMENT POLICY. ON SETTLEMENTS, WHICH INVOLVE MORAL AND LEGAL
PRINCIPLES IN WHICH AMERICANS DEEPLY BELIEVE,
US CAN ACHIEVE A CONSENSUS AND CAN, IF IT WISHES, ACT. IT IS
"CHILLING THOUGHT" THAT WHEN SADAT'S ADVISOR HAFIZ ISMAIL SAW
SECRETARY KISSINGER IN EARLY 1973, HE WAS TOLD FRANKLY THAT
EGYPT IS A DEFEATED NATION; IT WAS ONLY EGYPT'S DECISION TO GO TO
WAR IN OCTOBER 1973 WHICH FORCED ISRAELI MOVEMENT. EVEN WITH
PRO-ISRAELI CONGRESS, AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT ON EVEN OF ELECTIONS
IN 1956 WAS ABLE MOVE DECISIVELY. SAME THING
OCCURRED EARLY IN OCTOBER WAR WHEN UK AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO TOLD
SADAT OF USG'S READINESS NOT SHIP ARMS TO ISRAEL IF SADAT
ACCEPTED CEASEFIRE (SIC).

(B) MORALITY IN US POLICY. IMPLICIT IN PARTICIPANTS' REMARKS WAS
PROFOUND INTEREST IN HOW NEW ADMINISTRATION'S CONCERN FOR HUMAN
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RIGHTS WILL BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTION IN ME. ISRAELI SETTLEMENT
POLICY AND SITUATION OF WEST BANK ARABS WERE DISCUSSED IN THIS
CONTEXT.

(G) SADAT UNDER PRESSURE. SERIES OF AMERICAN LISTENERS HAVE COME
TO ME. GOVERNOR SCRANTON, WHOSE "EVEN HANDED" RECOMMENDATION
WAS VILIFIED, IS PARTICULARLY REMEMBERED. PERHAPS SADAT SHOULD
BE "BLAMED" FOR UNDERSESTIMATING USG'S ABILITY TO DELIVER ON PEACE
DURING A TIME OF ARMISTICE. PERHAPS SADAT HAS UNREASONABLY
RAISED EXPECTATIONS IN ARAB WORLD. SECRETARY VANCE WAS THE
LATEST TO VISIT AND REDISCOVER THE OBVIOUS. SOCIAL EARTHQUAKE CAN
OCCUR AGAIN AND SOON IF USG DOES NOT ACT.

(H) DEMOGRAPHY IS NEW FACTOR. BASIC ASPECTS OF ARAB/ISRAELI
DISPUTE HAVE REMAINED CONSTANT OVER THE YEARS, WITH ONE EXCEPTION,
THE PRESENT DEMOGRAPHIC EXPLOSION. IN TEN YEARS TIME THERE WILL
BE 10 MILLION MORE EGYPTIANS AND MORE PALESTINIAN ARABS THAN
JEWS "IN ISRAEL".
MATTHEWS

NNN

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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